

Jackie Lacey

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NEWS RELEASE

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Transient Charged with Capital Murder In Westlake Arson Fire that Killed Five

A 21-year-old transient was charged today with capital murder for allegedly setting fire to a vacant building in the Westlake District that left five people dead, the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office announced.

Johnny Josue Sanchez (dob 7/14/94) is scheduled to be arraigned after 2 p.m. today in Department 30 at the Foltz Criminal Justice Center in case BA447545. Prosecutors will ask that he be held without bail.

Deputy District Attorney Sean Carney with the Arson and Explosives Section is prosecuting the case.

The blaze broke out about 7 p.m. Monday in a large vacant commercial building at 2411 W. Eighth St. near MacArthur Park. Sanchez allegedly set a fire after getting into a dispute with other transients at the site, killing Jerry Dean Clemons, 59, and Mary Ann Davis, 44. Authorities have yet to identify two males and one female victim.

Sanchez is charged with five counts of capital murder with the special circumstances of multiple murders and arson murder and two counts of attempted, premeditated murder.

Prosecutors will decide later if they will seek the death penalty against Sanchez.

The case remains under investigation by the Los Angeles Police Department's Robbery-Homicide Division.

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[About the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office](#)

Los Angeles County District Attorney Jackie Lacey leads the largest local prosecutorial office in the nation. Her staff of nearly 1,000 attorneys, 300 investigators and 800 support staff members is dedicated to protecting our community through the fair and ethical pursuit of justice and the safeguarding of crime victims' rights.